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HOW CAN AMERICA BEST CONTRIBUTE TO THE MAINTENANCE OF THE WORLD'S PEACE?

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In putting down my views on this subject I am not unaware that it is a delicate matter for a foreigner to make suggestions to citizens of another country as to the principles on which they should conduct their affairs. My excuse is the importance of the subject to the world at large. I will not, therefore, waste time in apologies, but will state briefly such views as I have been able to form, at a distance from the scene and without the advantage of conversation with leading Americans.

The conclusion of this war will be, in my opinion, the great turning-point of civilization. Either we shall move henceforth seriously and deliberately in the direction of peace, or we shall move to a continual increase of armaments among the nations already armed, the arming of those that are not armed, and, in particular, of the United States and China, and a series of wars in which civilization itself may be engulfed. Which of these alternatives will be adopted will depend, to a great extent, upon the influence the United States may be able and willing to exert at the peace settlement. I have always thought that the most hopeful issue of the war would be a peace made by the intervention of President Wilson, and followed by a congress at which he should preside. The United States is the one great nation not directly interested in the outcome of the war, not seeking increase of territory, or prestige, or power, not inspired by the desire for revenge. Of all the governments that may be concerned with the future of Europe, and therefore, of the world, yours is the only one likely sincerely to take the view of the peoples instead of that of the militarists and diplomats. And the imperative condition of peace is that the view of the peoples should be heard and acted upon for the first time in history.

The congress at which I hope to see the United States occupy a leading position, should be one where all the European states, not only the belligerents, should be represented. The belligerent

governments are not to be trusted to aim at a permanent peace. Their representatives are not likely to have the imagination to conceive such a purpose, nor even the desire to pursue it. They will be, indeed, in all probability the same who made the war. But the neutral powers may be trusted, I think, to be favorable to a radical change in the spirit and organization of European diplomacy. And a strong lead given in that direction, as it might be given by the United States, would be likely to be backed by the British government and by the better elements of public opinion everywhere. Everything, in fact, will depend on the impulse given. And that impulse could be given with the greatest force and the greatest disinterestedness by the United States.

The business of the congress would be twofold. First, the settlement of the questions arising immediately out of the war. Secondly, the creation of a new international organization. The first point will deal mainly with territory and indemnities. What territory will actually come up for settlement, only the military result of the war can determine. And it is probable, though not desirable, that the matter will be arranged between the belligerents, in the preliminaries of peace. The detailed settlement, however, should be left to be carried out by an international commission, under the guidance of principles laid down by the congress. And the United States would, no doubt, throw all its weight on the side of the principle that in any transfer of territory the interests and wishes of the populations concerned should be the only point kept in view. With regard to indemnities, they should not be penal, but belligerents whose territories have been invaded and ravaged should be awarded compensation.

It is, however, with regard to the future that I should hope the most from the influence of the United States. The congress ought not to dissolve without substituting for the system of alliances under which Europe has been suffering an international guarantee of peace. I have already put forward, elsewhere, at some length, the form I think such a guarantee might take. It should be, I think, a treaty agreement between the powers to submit their disputes to arbitration, or conciliation, before taking any military measures; and the treaty shall be backed by the sanction of force, in case of a breach by any of the signatory powers. I do not myself propose an international force nor an international executive, though there

are many who put forward such proposals. But I think the powers should be bound to apply joint pressure, if necessary, by their national armaments, to guarantee the fulfillment of the treaty.

If such a scheme, or any more drastic one, is to be adopted and to be successful, I believe it to be, if not essential, yet very important, that the United States should be one of the signatory powers. And it is here that I see the great problem and the great choice for the American people. Will you be willing, in the interest of peace, to depart from your traditional policy of non-intervention in European disputes, with the chance of being involved in hostilities over a question which, in the first instance, is purely European? Your intervention, it may be suggested, might take the form not of armed force, but of a refusal to trade with a power that should break the treaty. But such refusal would of course mean economic loss to your country. As far as that is concerned, it would be a question of balancing such loss against that which must fall on neutrals, no less than on belligerents, if war breaks out. But such questions are not and should not be decided merely on grounds of economic interest. The American people would have to decide whether they care enough for peace to take risks for it. And on their decision may depend the possibility of peace. The alternative seems to be an America unentangled by agreements with European states, yet progressively arming herself to meet possible menace from them. If that course is adopted by the United States, most probably the European states will continue the system of armed isolation or alliances. And the question will be, not whether there shall be another war, but simply when it will break out.

If a council of conciliation such as I have elsewhere suggested should be set up, to that council should be referred not only actual disputes but burning questions such as are certain to lead to disputes. These all turn, I think, on race and trade. Both these kinds of question lie behind the present war: race troubles in the Balkans, and trade rivalry in Morocco and elsewhere. There is, I believe, no ultimate solution of such questions other than complete toleration, political, social and religious, wherever different races are included in a single political system, and complete freedom of trade and of immigration. The enormous difficulty of such a solution, and the mass of prejudice and interest against which it would have to contend, are at least as patent to you in America as to us in Europe.

It must be a long and difficult campaign to change public sentiment. But the campaign would be sensibly assisted if an impartial international council should consider the whole situation in time of peace, and suggest possible lines of settlement. The adoption, for example, of the policy of the "open door" in all undeveloped territories would obviate much of the friction that makes for war. The great question of the immigration of the colored races into territory occupied by white ones is more difficult. Yet the ventilating of it by an impartial international body and the focussing of the public opinion of the world upon reasonable compromises might do much to prevent the outbreak of war over issues no war can permanently settle.

In these brief notes, I have, I hope, shown clearly the importance I attach to the action that may be taken by the United States at the conclusion of the war. Naturally I do not presume to advise. But I think the mere facts of the situation show that upon the action your country may be able and willing to take may depend the whole trend of western civilization. And in trying to show that, I have, I think, accomplished the task I was invited to undertake.